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**HOUSING
ISSUE**

JULY 1952

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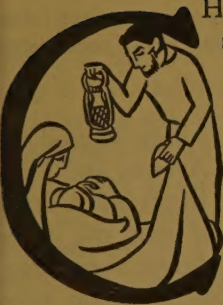
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EDITORIAL



CHRIST was born in a stable, we remind ourselves as we approach the subject of housing. A stable was poor shelter indeed, but shelter it was. Shelter—a house—a home: a basic need of man, a place for protection from the elements, in which to eat and sleep, and more than that a place to live with one's family and to grow together in God.

So many people are deprived of adequate housing today that they have to grab at any vacancy; a housing project may not be ideal, but it is better than no place at all. And men who are alive to the needs for a Christian way of life are painfully aware of this dilemma. A short-range program which satisfies on a mammoth scale the acute need for housing in the end seems to defeat the primary purpose of fostering family life; yet the need is *immediate* and can we hold out the long-range program of decentralization—of people spread out and building homes and communities away from congested cities—as the only solution?

Because of the manifest difficulties of the situation we have decided in this issue to allow a latitude of opinion and to approach the problem from different angles. We should like to point out that it would be easy to write a soap opera with the landlord, the land speculator, the vested interests as the sole villains of the piece. But this would be a falsification. Too often tenant as well as landlord thinks that a place for a television set is more important than a place for a baby. Venetian blinds are more of an inducement than fresh air. Human needs are forgotten in the pursuit of luxuries.

But the immensity and the complexity of the problem should not discourage us, although they should remind us of the selflessness, sense of justice, devotion to the common good, and wholehearted devotion to the love of Christ which are needed for its solution. The very need should evoke an agonized plea to the Spirit of Counsel.

THE EDITOR

Housing in Harlem

W*E may as well look at the worst side of the picture first. Ann Foley, director of Harlem Friendship House, describes conditions that exist in all Negro ghettos in America.*

Ann Foley: Friendship House of Harlem has been located for fourteen years on 135th Street between Lenox Avenue and Fifth Avenue. At the present time we rent three store fronts and a small apartment. However, last October we learned that the three square blocks including the south side of 135th Street were designated for a housing project. This area includes our main store front, our lending library, office and meeting room. So we shall soon be moving. As Friendship Houses in other cities have found it advantageous to buy rather than rent, so, perhaps, shall we. Yet despite some disadvantages, renting these many years has had the great advantage of making us one with the community in its housing problems.

We have a five-room apartment, Madonna Flat, where all the staff workers eat together and a few of them live. Madonna Flat is a duplicate of thousands of apartments in the area except that the others generally house families, and many are divided and sub-divided to the extent of families of five and six children living in one room. The overcrowding in innumerable instances is intense. Damp, cellar-like basements are commonly used as living quarters. This excessive overcrowding is due to a general housing shortage aggravated by segregation. Negroes are, to a large extent, refused the opportunity of moving out of the area.

For the resident of Harlem, added to overcrowding is a second grave difficulty of the irresponsibility of the property owners. The tenements of New York City were conceived, born, and nurtured for profit, with a resultant lack of responsibility toward the tenant as a person. In the old age of a tenement, the results of this irresponsibility are devastating. In countless tenements of Harlem it is commonplace for the plumbing and the electricity to break down in one way or another every few weeks. At Madonna Flat we have a large supply of candle ends on hand for electrical emergencies, which sometimes take days to fix. Fortunately we have a gas stove so we do not suffer from interrupted cooking, although some of our neighbors do. The dumb waiter in our tenement is unusable, so garbage disposal is always a problem.

This, in turn, aggravates the constant battle with rats and roaches. A good friend of ours lives with her baby in a basement up the street and just recently the baby was bitten by a rat.

Many of the existing conditions are, of course, in direct violation of the law, but the tenant ordinarily does not even know who is his landlord. The landlord hires an agent in most cases, and usually the total concern of the agent is to collect the rents and show a profit on the house. He is generally unwilling to make any repairs, and often great pressure by the tenant is required before the slightest adjustment is made. Numerous tenants live in constant fear of eviction and frequently do not know their rights under the law. The agent capitalizes on this and seeks to intimidate whenever he can. We have had some very unpleasant experiences ourselves and we know that for many others it is much worse, because our tenement is in much better condition than many. We have had people come to us for help about unspeakable plumbing conditions, broken floors and walls, and falling ceilings. Too often the landlord will do nothing unless legally forced, and few are the tenants who have the knowledge, much less the time, energy and money to carry on such a fight.

From years of neglect housing violations in large areas of Harlem are now difficult to avoid. Illegal housing conditions are widespread, so widespread that the Housing and Buildings Department of New York City cannot begin to take care of the problem. If all housing laws were strictly enforced in Harlem, many tenements, basements and rooms could not be used; and, since the general public enforces segregation and would be unwilling to have these people move out into other areas there would be many homeless people. The city authorities realize this situation; hence they do not try to enforce all the laws.

To help improve the condition of tenants, organizations known as "tenant leagues" have been formed and some of them have been quite successful. They work similarly to unions—their strength coming from uniting and carrying through together on behalf of each individual. Legal action is used and the rights of the tenants upheld in many cases which an individual tenant would not have won alone. Friendship House once belonged to a tenant league made up of people of our tenement and adjoining ones. But it is no longer operating. To work effectively a tenant league requires continuous interest and co-operation on the part of all its members, and the poor have a myriad of problems to sap their time and energy.

Another attempt to meet Harlem's housing problems is the housing projects erected by the federal and local governments. Actually, however, these projects are just "new tenements." They have more air space, sunlight, and grass, but they are still tenements of four and five-room apartments. They will not deteriorate as much as former tenements because a strict supervision sees to proper maintenance and prevents overcrowding. There is a set number of people for each apartment, so if a new baby arrives the family may have to move; or if grandfather dies it may be impossible for grandmother to move in with her son. There doesn't seem to be much choice between slum tenements and new "supervised" tenements for making a Christian pattern of living.

Let us consider for a moment the project proposed for our area. It will be different from any of the projects previously erected in New York City. It will be one of eight projects planned by the Mayor's Committee on Slum Clearance under Title I of the National Housing Act of 1949. The federal and local governments will pay for the acquiring of the land while the project will be put up by private capital and the relocation of the tenants will be done by a private group.

The new housing will be "middle-income"—the apartments renting as twenty-nine dollars per room per month. At such a price less than three per cent of the people now living on the site can afford to move back into the new project. There are an estimated 1,683 families in the area, and according to income an estimated 1,010 will be eligible for low-rent public housing, for which they will have priority. However, there are many requirements for public housing besides income—size of family, stable family group, regular income, citizenship, and proof of residence—and many of the people will not be able to meet all the requirements. A large number of those unable to move into either kind of project will move into other already overcrowded areas of Harlem. Statistics show that there is for the whole of New York City less than one per cent vacancies, and the proposed project will provide considerably fewer dwelling units than the present buildings. With the factor of segregation increasing the difficulty of relocation it is difficult to see how "slum clearance" can be fully effective in Harlem.

There is no easy solution to the problem of overcrowded slum areas, but there are many men in private organizations, men of good will with a sincere concern for the individual person, who give their full time to working toward a solution. In talking with them and working with them it seems to me that they can and

may be led to a decentralist solution. It seems fairly obvious that for some kind of a solution vacant land sites must be used, and to find them means going well out beyond city working opportunities and city facilities. Some of the men have considered the value of attempting to convince business and industry to break up into smaller branches and move outside the city. These are scant beginnings of course, but they are beginnings.

But what about the people themselves? Are they simply to be pushed about according to the good or bad ideas of these men in high positions? Can they not of themselves decide to live differently? Unfortunately, they have been conditioned to centralized, city living—our whole civilization is geared to it. They are propertyless and working at routine jobs so that their initiative has been deadened. However, housing is one of man's basic needs, and present conditions wherein this need is so poorly satisfied may move the "common man" to strike out for himself in the direction of a radical change.

Builders

"Our Father" . . . smoke from town slides off toward heaven
Slips from chimneys, parts the stillness . . .
Searching smoke drifts over rooftops,
Sifts its substance into wet air.

"Father," God Who art in Heaven,
Man You made . . . must seek to praise You,
Flesh and bone You shaped from nothing,
Soul You housed with whispered "Find Me."

Man You made . . . he too is builder;
Clay and water molds together
By the magic in his fingers,
Wood and steel, the earth combining.

Earth You gave him builds his houses,
Feeds his fires, fills his dreaming.
Smoke ascends and breaks to nothing.
He, the master of all matter . . .

Smoke ascends and breaks to nothing.
Father, teach me of Your secrets,
Lest my soul be lost as smoke goes
Lest my life be sifted ashes,
Feed Thy handwork; give me Bread.

A. F. LORING



A Place To Live

T*o read of Marycrest is an encouraging experience because being ordinary people with ordinary gifts the families there are nevertheless effecting a radical change in providing themselves with a Christian environment some twenty-five miles from New York City.*

Ed Willock: I have been a member in an experiment which is now in its fourth year, the purpose of which is to build a community of houses for its members in a spacious area where the families can regain responsible control over their environment and thus exercise greater discretion in the education of their children. This article is not meant to be an advertisement for the Marycrest community for we already have applicants in excess of our quota, nor do I intend to imply that we have once and for all solved *the* question of housing. Quite the contrary. Our experiment has succeeded only to the degree that we have dealt properly with the personal and environmental problems which are uniquely our own. Its general value rests upon the hope that our attempts, as recorded here, may encourage other families to try similar experiments adapted to their own needs and opportunities. I intend to deal simply with the matter of house building, whereas I assure you, the accompanying problems are each deserving of lengthy concern.

It was only after a great deal of agitation on the part of a few individuals that we collected enough determined men to make a house-building plan feasible. Only a few men had the vision, and they spirited others along an wholly unfamiliar route. A priest stationed in the vicinity of the site quietly planted the idea in a few men's minds. I mentioned the scheme at a few of my talks while editor of *Integrity*. An early enthusiast divulged his good news to a bus-driver en route. Our determination (or folly as some have said) attracted other men, some of whom have stayed. I personally feel certain that our quick actions in purchasing the land and starting to work (an action that some rue as being precipitous) was a deciding factor in persuading a group who hovered on the brink of endless discussion. One of the men who was most instrumental in initiating our experiment has since left us. We have been decidedly blessed in having wives who though sometimes reluctant were open to conviction. The attitudes of the wives can either make or break a thing of this kind.

flee the academic

It was our good fortune to find ourselves to be a group of fathers whose interest in decentralism, back to the land, and Christian-humanism, was utterly non-academic. Very few of us could afford the luxury of contemplating the plight of the proletariat objectively and disinterestedly. With few exceptions, we all had serious housing problems. There was no one among us for whom the original fee of six hundred dollars did not appear to be an almost insurmountable obstacle. In the family sense of the term we were poor, that is to say, we barely managed to pay our bills each week and had nothing left over either for luxuries or savings.

The first nine or ten of us were, to all intents and purposes, strangers to each other, brought together by the common need for community and a home. The fact that all the members are at present Catholic is very misleading if one supposes that Catholicism is a likely basis for agreement in regard to temporal matters. Converts and non-Catholics are very likely to make this mistake, to regard Catholicism as a collection of similar people. I do not wish to underestimate the unifying influence of grace and virtue, but I must insist that Catholicism in no way indicates a preference in environment, culture or politics. We are, and have been, utterly diverse in our tastes and views, holding commonly only the faith and a practical desire for co-operation to the end of community.

The ages of parent-members vary from early fifties to late twenties. We have two families of newlyweds and two families with children in college. Although an Irish strain predominates, the backgrounds of the members include English, Negro, Alsatian, Italian, Jewish, and others. Among them we have had lawyers, writers, policemen, roofers, shippers, teachers and bus-drivers.

This great divergence of views has succeeded in keeping alive a speculative attitude and a certain healthy quarrelsomeness which, in the absence of wise counsel, makes for real education. If some other group had attempted the same thing under similar circumstances, we would have had a yardstick for measuring our own development, but, as it is, we have been thrown upon the necessity of experimentation to find out through much error the way the thing should be done.

Building is a highly complicated matter of architecture, politics, engineering, finance, and diplomacy (especially when building as a community). This has required many meetings. The entire membership is convened twice a month and there have always been weekly meetings of committees and officers. Some members have resented as unnecessary much of what appeared to be useless debate and red tape, yet we have to some degree accepted as inevitable that propertyless people must confer a great deal if they hope to gain economic independence in a democratic fashion. No one has been sent to lead us (as has been so often hoped). Instead, we have been placed upon our own resources and elective prudence. The continuous leader of our little crusade, we pray, is Christ.

this is a house?

No one in the community had had experience in building houses before we began our first house. Two of our members were electricians. These two men were the only members who could have qualified for the title of building trades-men. As a matter of fact, some minutes were spent at one of our early meetings discussing the unfamiliar yet remarkable uses to which a hoe is ordinarily put. Driving a nail, digging a hole, and sawing a piece of wood were all novelties. As a group, we showed little aptitude for such work as house building. Yet we are now engaged in building our fifth house, having already housed twenty-nine people—children and adults.

Personally, I was impressed at the time I read the challenge issued by Father McNabb, O.P., in which he insisted that despite his aging years, he and a fellow oldster could through their own

efforts build a habitable house. On the whole, the difficulties of building are highly exaggerated. Hardly more skill is required to build a simple modern house than is needed to operate a senior Erector Set. Diligence, patience and care are necessary, but very little skill. This is true whether the house be of frame or wet masonry construction.

Three kinds of experience are required in building a house; the experience of an architect, of a master builder, and of a contractor. Of these three skills the one most expensive to hire and the easiest to acquire is that of contracting. An architect can save the amateur house builder a good deal of money by limiting plans to structural patterns that are easy to execute, and by recommending materials that are durable yet inexpensive. Periodic advice or help from a master builder is also invaluable. Most of the work on a house is repetitious. For example, laying cinder blocks, framing walls, sheathing sides or shingling roofs are all a collection of repeated actions which if properly begun by a competent man can be repeated by an amateur.

An architect, if at all competent, is bound to save a group such as ours time and money. The same is true of advice or periodic help from a master builder. The same is not true of a contractor because a contractor is primarily a merchant, not a mechanic. The architect designs a house *for use*, the builder builds a house *for use*. The contractor is a business man, that is, he's in the game for the money that's in it. To him every house is merely a salable product. It requires years of training to be an architect, and even more training to be a builder. A contractor, on the other hand, requires no more than shrewdness and capital. It seems to follow, then, that amateurs can more readily dispense with the services of a contractor than with those of an architect or builder.

We decided at an early date to do our own contracting. This decision saved us money and, to a great extent, prescribed the limits of our experiment. As regards the saving in money, we had an enlightening experience one time when we sought bids from six local contractors to build us a simple basement foundation upon which we would raise the structure. These bids, seriously submitted, and all following the same specifications as regards materials and labor, ranged in price from nine hundred to nineteen hundred dollars—a difference of one thousand! After investigating we found that the materials needed for building this basement would cost less than four hundred dollars, and that two experienced men could accomplish the work in four days. Thus, presuming the equipment, material and labor cost the contractor

eight hundred dollars (paying his two workers fifty dollars a day), the highest bidder would have made eleven hundred dollars profit, and the lowest bidder one hundred dollars profit!

whence the lucre?

We acquired nothing but experience when we spent almost four months attempting to get FHA insurance on bank loans. This involved visits to the New York offices and a number of fruitless trips to Washington, D. C. The New York representative of FHA intimated that he only insured solid ventures in which no risks were involved! This made us wonder as to what function FHA truly fulfilled, since any private loan association will jump at the chance of putting money into a *sure* thing! It was also apparent that the New York branch of FHA smiled only upon extensions of existing town limits, since we were refused help on the basis that we had only a dirt road and were more than two miles away from a theatre or super-market! Providentially, FHA proved to be only a blind alley, for had we been so unfortunate as to have acquired this insurance we would have had to employ a bonded contractor, which would have doubled (at least) the cost of the building!

It is only in retrospect that one can describe the manner in which each family acquired the moneys with which to build. All our financial plans went for naught except those that placed confidence in God's moving the heart of some generous patron. The money-men would not touch so idealistic a venture which boasted no productivity other than children.

Various charitable persons, none of them rich, have extended building mortgages to those families who have built or who are now building. Perhaps this particular act of faith has been required of us—to trust in generosity from God-knows-what source. Certainly we have been deprived of boastfulness in our venture, for without such unplanned and unforeseen generosity we could have accomplished nothing.

blood, sweat and tears

Our first experience with building tools was acquired when we purchased an Army barracks for fifty-six dollars, pulled it down piece by piece, transported it by truck to the site of Marycrest, and erected a large building shack which served as shelter for men and tools on an otherwise roofless fifty-two acres. We lavished unbelievable attention upon the first basement which we built. We traveled twenty-five miles by bus, sometimes walking the last three miles to get to the site, where we proceeded to our unaccustomed task without electricity or water save that acquired by our own

digging. This work was done on Saturdays, Sundays and holidays, after our regular week's work had been completed.

I shall never forget the day when my five-year old son overturned our drinking water, leaving us burned and parched under an unmerciful sun, with no water about save our own perspiration! We have tried valiantly to begin and end our day's work with prayer. Good intentions have certainly been rewarded in that no serious accident has occurred on the job. The abandon with which lethal tools have been wielded, the awkwardness with which lofty stagings have been traversed, exposure to winter wind and summer heat, have barely left a scratch (not to exclude poison-ivy scratches). Discouragements have been plentiful. The half mile of road, built by all too human hands, is Marycrest's monument to misery. We can recall many a tired evening, when, having put our tools away, we found ourselves without a conveyance to take us to our bus. Many evenings we stood for twenty-five miles in the overcrowded bus, arriving home for Sunday dinner just before bedtime. Who can forget the endless days of laying 65-lb. cinder blocks, or the day when Jack Olive began his two-week vacation only to find that his bull-dozer site was hidden beneath a sea of rain water, or the time when John Hogan was ordered to cease operations on his house by the local authorities, with four eager workers in the midst of their summer vacations? How many shovelfuls of soil have been moved from place to place? How many cars have been salvaged from mud-holes? But let's not count our wounds before the battle is over.

inexpensive construction

We have learned a few things about saving money. For example, it is safe to say that with little money one cannot afford to depart from conventional building. We at first suspected that the materials of which the walls are built have a considerable influence in the cost. This is not true. Such things as plumbing, roofing, foundations have a far greater fluctuation in cost. Simple two-by-four framing or cinder block walls represent but a small fraction of the entire cost of building. Impervious or muddy soil might indicate that underground construction will be an endless expense. Avoid when choosing materials as much maintenance cost as possible, else the house will never be finished and paid for.

Prefabricated houses save time in erection but they do not save money. Seldom is it helpful to have more than four men working on a house at the same time. Sometimes two men are enough. This consideration is important with us, because we repay one another's labor. Painting, trimming, and furnishing home

appliances can be frightfully expensive if the owner is not wise. Dry-plaster walls for the interior are possible for amateurs whereas wet plastering is extremely difficult and expensive to contract. Cement floors covered with asphalt tile are dry, easy to install, and they are not hard on the feet. Bay windows, extra chimneys, wooden clap-boards, fancy architecture, rumpus-rooms, over-night landscaping, special windows, imported materials and garages are all for the birds—with money.

lots of advice

Two things are noteworthy about the advice that can be so easily found about house building and decentralization. It would be foolhardy to experiment in any case where advice from a competent man can be readily acquired. A healthy inquisitiveness will save the amateur builder hours of time. At the same time be assured that there are at least ten good ways of doing almost anything. The student must be docile to good advice, but he must seek it in a discriminating way. Elementary information is the most important, such as the proper use of hammer and saw, and conventional methods of framing and masonry. As a general rule, leave your plans somewhat flexible until you find out what supplies are available at your local building supplies' outlet. Almost invariably you find that the special type of material you plan to use is not in stock, and you have to accept some substitute.

willing hands

It has been our experience that real help will often come from unexpected sources. Most people (sometimes even relatives) like to help along a family who are trying to build a house. Non-members of Marycrest have been tremendously willing to wield hammers and paint brushes at various times; in retrospect it seems unlikely that we could have produced very much without these generous neighbors.

When we first began to work it was expected that every member would give every available moment of his free time to the project. Had not this sentiment been held by a small nucleus, it is doubtful if we could have overcome the first physical discouragements. At present only one day a week is required of each member. It is yet to be seen if this will suffice. The association demands a bond from each house owner in which he is required to repay as many hours of work as were donated in building his own house. Although the occasion has not yet arisen, it is doubtful if the members would build a house for a man unless he has been zealous in furthering the work program.

who's on first?

The method we have used to decide whose house will be built first is a simple one. A committee composed of members not immediately anxious to build was elected to investigate the disposition of those families who were hoping to start soon. These prospects were judged on the three counts: Would their residence be best for the common good of all concerned? Was their need for housing great? Were they financially able to undertake the task?

When these questions were answered the various members were assigned priorities. The possessor of top priority could, if he wished, waive his privilege if another member became better disposed than he to breaking ground. From the very beginning of construction, each house was built to fit the needs of a specific family. It would be safe to say that the community has not and will not build a man's house for him, but they will *help him* to build his house. This is an important distinction to maintain, because it indicates that the bulk of initiative is left with the individual. We like to father our members, not mother them.

Recently a nearby priest referred to our group as a bunch of communists. This struck me as being very funny, since this is the first time that the three resident families (and most of those to come) ever owned private property. Each member upon building his house may receive a deed which entitles him to total ownership of the house and acre upon which it is built. In addition to this, he is entitled to the use of a pro-rata share of the rest of the communal land. This share represents, at present, about three more acres. On the communal land a member may herd cattle, raise grain, and so on.

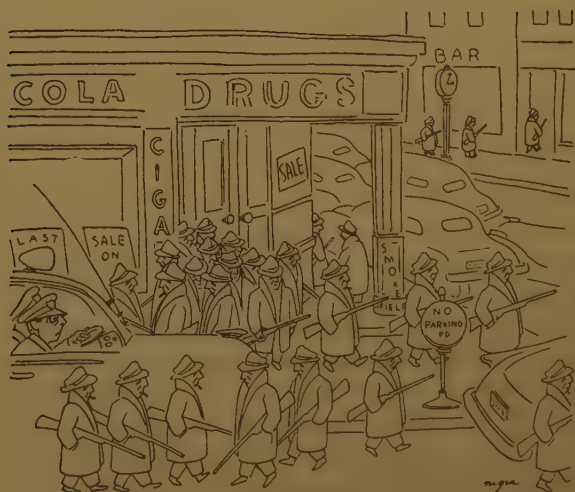
spiritual effects

Building a house is an experience which few fathers can afford to miss. For most of us, it was the first experience which required prolonged endurance. The Hollywood influence had conditioned us—like most Americans—to cope only with problems which could be resolved over a box of popcorn. It matures a man to drive hundreds of nails, lay hundreds of bricks, erect hundreds of studs, apply hundreds of shingles, all to an end of his own choosing. A house cannot be built with a gesture. It takes thousands of gestures. How different such an experience can be compared with the urban arts of calling a cop, adjusting a thermostat, taking a cab, putting a coin in the slot, registering a vote, complaining to the landlord! The virtue of patience has a better

chance of displacing the vice of passing the buck when a man has learned to live with a task that requires months to complete. He learns that he is not God (Let there be Light! And Light was made!). He learns to be man (Thou shalt earn thy bread by the sweat of thy brow!). This lesson is essential and elementary if one is ever to grasp the true implications of Christianity.

Building a house can go a long way toward reviving the prestige of the father of the family. All of a sudden, it seems, the children realize that the old man is as indispensable as the mother. Daddy in overalls displays enough glamour to his growing sons as to have at least an equal chance with Hopalong Cassidy of gaining their affections. In gaining some control over his material affairs, the father with the same hammer-blows gains title to paternal authority, a title which most of us have never had.

We have learned also that working together has cemented a unity which could never have been gained by mere discussion or common escape-interests. Persons who create together will learn to re-create together and even pray together. The opposite is seldom true.



PRODUCTS OF ENVIRONMENT?

"Homes for Christian Living"

THE writer, who works for the housing authority of a large city, gives us a broad view of the housing situation in this country.

Dennis Clark: The soul resides in the body and both body and soul reside in the house. The dwelling place is one member of the most basic triad of physical necessities. Along with food and clothing it is a primary elemental need for self-preservation. Winston Churchill once wrote, "We shape our homes and then our homes shape us." Allowing for the British domestic sentiment that somewhat overstates the case, we still must understand along with this statesman the tremendous force that housing and home life exert upon personality and family development in any nation.

Each house in our society is a monument, for good or ill, to those who are responsible for it. The designers, the builders, the owners and residents all leave their mark upon it. The house gives physical shape and dimensions to the habits and ideals of men. It is a simple matter to identify home types with certain civilizations. The Roman pro-consul, the medieval guildsman and the English country gentleman built dwellings revealing their abiding personal values and social desires. Our dwellings, while still fulfilling the major purpose of shelter, give a fairly accurate structural record of our contemporary tastes, motives and preoccupations.

a national problem

According to the 1950 Census nine million, or fully one fourth, of our non-farm homes are dilapidated or lacking one or more of the minimum sanitary facilities. Hundreds of thousands of our families are closeted in living quarters that are dangerous, expensive and gruesomely depressing. Good citizenship and moral integrity are imperiled by the creeping slumtides of our cities. In rural areas the dispossessed of the richest land in the world live in hovels that have caused recurring scandals, such as the recent ones connected with migrant labor in the southwest. Jerry-built shacks for servicemen's families, the chronic housing ills of "poor whites" and segregated Negro "ghettos" highlight the national problem. Rents are up fifty per cent over 1940 and the effective vacancy rate is uselessly low to meet demand. Population gains and shortages of materials promise to aggravate these conditions. Such facts indicate that much more than an excusable

minimum of families are without decent dwellings in this great democracy of ours.

Catholic responsibility

It is important, therefore, that Catholics be alert to the significance of these facts. If a broad enough effort is to be devoted to these housing problems in our communities, the Catholic population must join with the endeavors of others to seek solutions. The most direct action must take place on the local scene. Parish and diocesan interest, sensitive to local needs and information, is exceedingly valuable to broadly organized agencies trying to improve the immediate situation and plan for the future.

From another point of view, however, Catholics have a much more determining contribution to make to the housing sphere. Housing policy involves basic social judgments. Before specific, tangible buildings are erected, general aims must be defined. Such definition implies the formulation of premises that are more philosophical than technical. Who could help supply more profound and beneficial definitions than our modern Christian social apostles? Catholic social thought is comprehensive and yet detailed enough to bear intimately upon the course of individual, family and community welfare. Notions of the common good and individual prosperity are conditioned by our desire to imitate Christ and restore such key fields as housing to the care of Christian men.

The Christian apostolate is the most thorough social apostolate, paradoxically enough, because it is the most rigorous individual apostolate. The constant evaluation of motive and action against conscience produces in every phase of life both continuing moral inventory and lasting stimulus. The way we live, the goals and daily work of our families, the organization of our social life are leavened by the Gospel and the precepts of the Church. The kind of houses we can afford in the light of our commitment to live in the spirit of poverty, to practice charity, and to fulfil the obligations in education that we must assume as Catholics must mold our thinking. The kind of neighbors, churches and recreation we want must be decided by reflection on the modern counsels presented to us by the best of our Catholic thinkers. On all these things we must make decisions, for housing and its location are critical social factors.

teachings needed

In the field of family life alone there are whole areas of Catholic teaching that are as yet either misunderstood or unknown to the social science cults that actuate our housing policies. In

some cases the working hypotheses of Catholic marriage counselors and secular human relations experts dovetail, but in other instances they do not. An ideal of marriage that represents that union as a sacramental bond, continuing in divine grace, marked by a liturgical context and oriented toward a strong theism will definitely produce different conclusions about family life and housing needs than an opinion holding marriage to be a civil contract, dedicated to a secular idea of individual fulfillment and plastic to the changing standards of a fluid society.

There is a preference in Catholic circles for a stability of family life that involves a pattern of parental authority, land and home ownership and less mobility than is accepted by others. The subject of space standards in relation to family size is influenced by Catholic teaching on contraceptives. Desire for maternal supervision of children and parental educational responsibility also receive more emphasis in our writings than from other sources. These and a great many other concepts of family living must remain topics of Catholic interest and persuasion. The principles upon which home life and its physical surroundings are built must be subject to our scrutiny.

On the individual level there are considerations too numerous to list. The inculcation of ideas of the Christian stewardship of property have a direct relation to the care and repair of homes and the retarding of dilapidation. Under what better auspices than the morally therapeutic sympathies of the Church can personalities ruined in slum locales be rehabilitated and restored to psychological health? Better homes mean better home makers as well as improved structures.

one more apostolate

Many of our big city contractors are from Catholic backgrounds. They are the descendants of the sweating immigrant laborers of the nineteenth century, the big-handed Irish bricklayers and hustling Italian stonemasons. Artisan ability and craftsmanship have paid off—far too well in certain cases. The construction business is widely competitive and many of our successful contractors lead ruthless professional lives. They are past masters of the devious means and sharp practices manipulated for the greater honor and glory of self.

Surely there is full play for vocations here. There is much that could be done to alleviate the labor tensions, building short cuts and price gougings that make home building and buying a nightmare. The provision and preservation of dwellings must not be a mere exercise of technical skill or mechanical routine.

Ministering to the needs of families for living space is a delicate and difficult process requiring intelligence, insight and high standards of service.

The lack of adequate shelter at just prices is leading to more and more government intervention in this area. Unless honest, self-sacrificing men can find answers to the problems of home building and prove their worth the industry may become fair game for drastic public control and promotion, which is always less preferable than competent self-reliance. The field of housing is still largely without Catholics who are equipped to make decisions of deep social implication and act on them with technical proficiency. Architects, builders, planners, brokers and tradesmen are all needed. They will be useless, however, unless they come with a prayerful humility and a conviction that their work can be a strong, holy co-operation for betterment. They must work as if they worked with that Christ Who was a Galilean carpenter and Who bade us to "shelter the shelterless."

The home and the atmosphere of crucial attitudes and habits that it formulates and affects are too precious as institutions to be left to the vague whims of nebulous and monstrously impersonal cycles of supply and demand. Conscienceless marketing and predatory connivings will not do. This is especially true where low income families are concerned. A freshness of Christlike love is what is needed, identifying all alike, regardless of race or status, with the image of God that is the "alter ego" of all of us. Unless Catholics are devoted to the love of neighbor in basic and immediate things like housing, they can hope to influence only the incidentals of daily living in our society.

a wide threshold

Housing is also the key to community planning in the wider sense. With the increased advent of large-scale residential building, we must be aware of what wholesale planning portends. Never before has man possessed such mastery over machines and materials. Entire towns can be raised up in a year's time. This very thing is being done today in the new steel district around Morrisville, Pennsylvania where sixteen thousand new homes are built on a mass basis.

We must not allow housing to be relegated to the role of an afterthought as has been the traditional urban American custom. Corporate industry and transport interests must harmonize their aims with those of home builders. Our roaring, crowded, slum-branded cities are constant testimonies to our lack of civic sense, social discipline and communal order.

Eliel Saarinen, dean of American community planners, reveals wisely in his writings the part that a materialistic climate of opinion has played in the debasement of our taste and the intensification of our urban quandaries. "It must be borne in mind," he states, "that whatever is considered best for man, from the point of view of inner cultural growth, must be established as the governing principle in the shaping of a healthy urban environment." Certainly this is an apt cue for the presentation of the Catholic social program through democratic media to replace the vacuity and misdirection of much that now masquerades as planning. Our community contours are being frozen into forms that will endure in steel and concrete for two to three generations, and they will affect ways of living for longer than this. Either we will construct our communities in deference to the needs of healthy family living or we will allow homes and their occupants to be squeezed, piled, defiled and exploited by reckless social abuse.

the city parish

The stake of the parochial network in most of our urban areas is great and city planning policies deeply concern its future. The fact that pastors have to bid at inflated prices for land for schools and churches in places where new developments create a need is only an indication of the changes to be worked by shifting city trends. With only a very small percentage of American Catholics on the land the fate of the Church in this country largely stands or falls with the conduct of the urban Catholic population. Parishioners must be made conscious of the fact that community responsibilities extend far beyond merely having children and providing parochial schools for them.

The creation of a new order of values and tastes for our society is clearly needed. Depersonalization and machine age erosion have worn away many of the most desirable traits of our city dwellers. Vital human qualities are being lost. The Papal manifestos on social reconstruction auger the creation of new social forms if energy is forthcoming.

research

Along with all these things, and often prior to them, there should be persistent Catholic research into our changing housing needs. New studies and new methods are required if housing is not to be a game of the blind leading the blind. In this field the children of light are certainly not wiser in their generation than the children of darkness. There has been pathetically little research on housing matters done with Catholic tenets in mind. Further, non-Catholic researchers are seldom aware that Catholic social

positions are not the result of accumulated prejudices and exaggerated emotional and mental hangovers from an incense-clouded medievalism. It must be more vigorously and constantly affirmed that our points of view are the consistent emanations of a rational theology and philosophy, founded upon the acceptance and analysis of blunt facts. To leave the casting of family goals and community standards to anthropocentric devotees of scientism is to quit the field at a most important juncture.

If Catholicism is to be a major force in the sustenance of our social benefits and in the preservation of our individual liberties, both political and economic, it should induce among its adherents full community consciousness and initiative. The furtherance of apostolic activity requires a good order and adequate provision for daily needs. These things ease men's minds and allow exchange of information and example without the insecurity, bitterness and violence caused by destitution and caste systems. Catholic interest in housing must pertain to both public and private ventures. Intelligence and co-operation should accompany concern for the home, the master institution of civilized life. The duties of justice and charity are clear. Pius XII, in speaking of such duties, in 1949 declared, "These requirements (of social justice) include the provision for the people of the necessary houses, and above all for those who desire to found a family or are already doing so. Can there be conceived a social need of greater urgency?"



"THAT COMES WITH THE APARTMENT."

An Adequate House

A *RESIDENT* of Granger, Iowa, Eugene Geissler is well acquainted with the practice as well as the theory of adequate housing.

Eugene S. Geissler: This particular morning—Mary in bed with the mumps, Kathleen at school, and Nora still sleeping—Sarah, Sheila, and Molly came running across the back yard the hundred feet from the barn into the house, breathless.

"Mommy, we found the little kittens. You must come and see them. Right away. The kittens, Mommy, right away. In the barn, by the bales."

Twice a year this happens—really half a dozen times a year if one counts the pups and calves too.

By now "Mommy" is excited too. Just three bales of hay left this year piled two at the bottom and one across the crack on top.

"In there, between the bales."

"Where did they come from, Mommy?"

"Look how many there are!"

". . . four, five, six, seven . . . ?"

"Cute, aren't they?"

"Say, I just bet both mother cats had their young ones in the same place this year."

"Poor little kittens, so crowded."

"There weren't enough bales left this year. Just one hole. Poor kittens!"

"They *are* pretty crowded, aren't they?"

"That's what you might call inadequate housing," says Mommy.

"Not enough bales . . . but aren't they cute?"

Actually it wasn't inadequate housing at all—one little place for seven little cats and two big ones. Cats with their limited minds and souls; their sleek little bodies and calm nerves; their few duties and aspirations, can scarcely be housed inadequately. One year a hollow tree trunk; another year a dry spot in a mess of old insulation board piled up outside; next year the back seat of the car maybe. . . .

Any old crack of a place is all right for a bunch of cats, but a "cracker box" of a house (as someone called the modern two-bedroom house) is no place for a family.

what IS adequate housing?

I think there is no such thing as "Christian" housing. However, I think that there is such a thing as housing that is conducive to a Christian life. I want to make this distinction clear at the beginning. The best sort of housing is the kind that is most in accord with the nature of man, that is to say, the best sort of housing is the most natural kind of housing. In the matter of adequate housing even from the Christian point of view, one cannot, it seems to me, ask for more than that. This natural housing will be conducive to the Christian life.

I have talked to my neighbors about it, especially Fred, and Joe, and Julian—and to some people not exactly my neighbors; I have spoken to my wife about it. I have been actively engaged for four years building with my own hands adequate housing for ourselves (which at present means two parents and six children)—and I have come to the conclusion that adequate housing as a matter of space (though not necessarily convenience) was much better realized by the old-fashioned house than by the modern one. A lot of the things that we (myself, neighbors, et al) feel are necessary, as a matter of space, are the things houses used to have but do not have any more. This does not mean that the old-fashioned house always used its space to the best advantage, but that at least the space was there. It does not mean that the old-fashioned house was convenient, but that it was big enough. It must indeed be conceded to the modern house that it is tremendously more convenient than the old-fashioned one ever was, and it is a great point in favor of the modern house. But it cannot be the whole point. First there was sufficient space and not convenience; now there is convenience but not sufficient space. Obviously adequate housing means both of these.

For the purpose of this discussion of adequate housing, the subject is presented under four headings, which at the same time represent also the four great needs of adequate housing, a kind of four minimum standards. These four are as follows: sleeping space, living space, production space, and storage space.

sleeping space

Sleeping space is considered first because somehow that is today's commercial yardstick: houses are built and sold as two-bedroom houses, three-bedroom houses, and so on. To builders and sellers of houses the two-bedroom house is typical, average, profitable. But is it adequate?

Two bedrooms are not adequate. Two bedrooms are not minimum adequate sleeping space. I say this, because it is not in accord with the nature of man. It is most natural for him to need at least three bedrooms—so much so that there ought to be a law against anything less. In one sense there is, indeed, a law against less—the law of man's nature. Since it is natural for man to marry and have a family (any and all exceptions notwithstanding), it is normal and natural for a married couple to need one bedroom for themselves, and sooner or later two for their children. Anything less is not enough, and may even be an occasion of sin (unless maybe for people who are definitely and incurably sterile—and even then one should consider future owners).

As a matter of convenience, at least the parental bedroom should be on the first floor, and big enough to accommodate the current baby. And further, as a matter of convenience (so our neighbor Fred insists) there ought to be a bedroom for each two children, and separate ones, of course, for the sexes.

It is a good thing to see how these principles work out in practice so let me tell you about our sleeping space. We are two parents, six children (all girls) and expecting a seventh shortly. For the present we have three bedrooms upstairs—none downstairs—in a way already inadequate. But they are big rooms, as rooms go, and our plan always did include a "bedroom wing" downstairs when the need arose. So what we have is an east room, a north room, and a west room. The east room is really and truly the "kids' room." That's where the three youngest sleep, ages one, two, and three. Except for the ceiling it is panelled in plywood and will stand a lot of little hands and feet kicking and pawing the walls. In the north room the three oldest sleep, ages four, five, and nine. On the other end of the house, past the steps, the storage wall, the cedar closet, and father's small study, is the parental west room, the biggest of the rooms, fifteen by sixteen. The new baby will stay in this room about six months (though if it isn't a "good" baby it may have to sleep out in the hall at nights) after which it has somehow to make its way with the rest of the new generation at the other end of the upstairs. But the need for that parental bedroom downstairs is obvious enough already—and not merely as a matter of convenience.

Besides these sleeping rooms there is a very much sought-after little sleeping space behind a long, low, sliding door which opens on a recess under the slant of the roof—little more than enough for a bed and a body. A something extra, it is reserved

for emergencies like sickness, separating the children at nap time—and for special privileges.

living space

When the Pope, some years ago, spoke in an encyclical letter in German about *Lebensraum* for the family, I recall Bishop Muensch and Monsignor Ligutti looking around for a good way to say it in English. They finally settled for "living space" but one could tell they weren't quite satisfied with the word for it. This much is certain, however, a family needs it.

Now there are different kinds of living space—the kind, for instance, that is *Lebensraum*, and the kind that is part of adequate housing. In between these two are such things as a respectable back yard without which no family ought to be—big enough for a child to test his speed in, big enough for a picnic table, a game of horseshoes or croquet; big enough for a general gathering of neighbors; big enough for some trees and swings—and privacy. Actually this is so closely associated with the house itself that one must consider it when considering adequate housing. It is really not very much to ask for in the way of outdoor living space, but like the commercial case against the three-bedroom house, lots providing big back yards are not profitable. Small lots that don't ought to be condemned as sub-standard.

Naturally, the adequate house needs a living room and the modern house does provide it and in fairly good size too. The sad part of it is that it provides it at the expense of some other needed living space.

I hesitate to say that every house needs a dining room—but it has seemed to us that an adequate family house needs more living space indoors than a living room provides. It could be a dining room—though not merely used for dining. It could be a play room when the children are small and a dining room-library sort of a thing when they get bigger. We call ours "the kids' room" but in summer when the children are living mostly outdoors in the back yard it becomes—for the summer—the dining room. When they are bigger it will probably be the dining room all the time, plus serving also as a study room, or reading room, or whatever happens to be needed (such a vague generality as the last would simply appal the unimaginative commercial builder).

Even while a house may not expressly need a dining room, we think it necessary for gracious living that there be adequate dining space—not merely adequate as to size, but also adequate in the matter of tone and dignity. Hospitality may well be a lost virtue among us because housing lacks somehow the proper spaces to be

ospitable—a big back yard, a place for children apart from the living room, an adequate dining space. Family unity may well be a lost virtue among us partly because housing has somehow failed to provide perspective and setting for the family meal. The family table is something squeezed into a kitchen just big enough to be in the kitchen, or into the end of the living room just big enough to be a living room. It could conceivably be in the kitchen or the living room but not as an afterthought, only if these had been designed and built that much bigger for the purpose.

production space

Since the home should be productive, the house should be adequate for production. A kitchen is productive of meals and the modern house has made here perhaps its greatest contribution. Compared with the old kitchen, the modern kitchen must certainly be considered adequate. A utility room is productive of clean clothes and again the modern house has made a great contribution. But that is about the extent of production space for the modern house—two rooms that provide meals and clean clothes. Is there any other production space needed? Indeed, is there any other production needed at home at all?

Actually a good deal more is needed. People used to say that there were three necessities of life: food, clothing, and shelter. Some people would still say so, but it is an oversimplification. "Not by bread alone does man live." It is much closer to the truth to suggest that there are six necessities of life: food, clothing, shelter, recreation, education, and realization. Might not adequate housing mean some contribution also to recreation, education, and realization—as well as food, clothing, and shelter?

There is the matter of garden space. Like the back yard for living, it seems to us that garden space is so closely associated with housing that one must consider it when one considers adequate housing. A garden, quite apart from producing food, is such a fundamental, elementary, basic contributor to recreation, education, and realization that no house ought to be without it. It is one of those things that is right even when almost everyone is wrong about it, that is, without it. Like the back yard for outdoor living space, it is really so little of the big earth to ask for in the way of outdoor production space that one is tempted to blame its conspicuous absence on an oversight. Mind you, a garden is important, not so much for the food raised as for what it contributes to those three rather intangible necessities of recreation, education, and realization.

As a matter of production space there ought to be a place where people—especially children, can exercise their creativeness, according to their interests, in making and doing; and a place where people—especially grown-ups—can exercise the “higher faculties” in reading and thinking. All this may mean a shop, a sewing room, a study—though generally it could just mean a place in some of the adequate and ample space (if builders weren’t so close figuring) already there primarily for some other purpose: a sewing corner in the dining room; a study in the end of the bedroom, a shop and rumpus in the basement.

storage space

Having mentioned the basement, under what heading does it belong? We are generally convinced that a house needs a basement. Properly lighted, vented, and heated, it adds important and useful space to a house. We lived happily and comfortably in ours for two years before moving “upstairs.” Half of our neighbor Fred’s is a delightful playroom for the children. Another quarter of it is a “study” for his manuscript hobby. A third of mine is a shop, and when I get around to it the room at the bottom of the steps will be auxiliary living and production space for the children. I suppose there can be the equivalent of a basement on ground level, but—I am afraid—builders do not get around to putting it there.

Finally, to be adequate a house needs storage space. The modern house does well in providing closets, but what I mean is that a house needs a basement also for storage—and the utility room is not a substitute, though it is possible that a double (not single) garage (properly lighted, vented, and heated) might be. The things piled up in our basement could clutter up a place without a basement—so that people just would not have the things. Yet they are things a family needs seasonally: a homemade Christmas crib, boxes of toys, outdoor furniture, a pressure canner; jars for pickles, tomato juice, beets; a freezer for meat, beans, corn; wood for the fireplace; a long low children’s table and bench. . . These things probably wouldn’t be at all without this convenient and relatively inexpensive storage space—and life would mean that much less for the family.

So in conclusion and in summary, adequate housing—minimum adequate housing—as we have it figured, partly from experience and partly from the nature of man—means seven rooms and bath, basement (or storage space), respectable back yard, and garden.

No Vacancy



FROM her experience as member of a city housing board, Mrs. Mahoney treats of the problems of the many searching desperately for a place to rent.

Mary H. Mahoney: Probably no one would take issue with that section of Article 25 in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* which reads, "Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of his family, including food, clothing, housing. . . ." This quotation bears a close resemblance to the outline of *Rights Pertaining to the Family*, drawn up by a committee appointed by the National Catholic Welfare Conference, which cites the following: the right to economic security sufficient for the stability and independence of the family, and the right to housing adapted to the needs and functions of family life.

Yet what do we find in contemporary American life?

In the Wanted-To-Rent column of a morning newspaper, published in an industrial community of New England, there appeared these ads:

Single unfurnished house. 2-3 bedrooms wanted by couple with 3 yr. old child. \$135 limit.

M.I.T. graduate, wife and well-behaved 4½ yr. old son, urgently need two bedrooms, unfurnished apartment. Excellent references.

Business Executive—3 in family, one teen-aged daughter. Need 4 or 5 rooms. Will pay up to \$125 monthly.

Each edition reveals the search of other families for shelter; and are not as financially secure as those mentioned above. Some, of course, like a teacher from a neighboring community, rely on the listings provided by organizations or church societies only to find that his eleven-year old son closes the door to an otherwise desirable tenant.

But there are times when a roof over one's head does not constitute a blessing. Consider, for instance, the young veteran who secured a position in a defense industry. He and his wife, also a veteran, with their two children went to live with her mother until they could find quarters of their own. The landlord objected to the presence of children and threatened eviction. In despair the father took what he could get—a bedroom furnished with two double beds which he shared with another couple and their three children, at fourteen dollars a week! Or think of the family of six, including four children, evicted through no fault of theirs from a home in the suburbs, living, eating and sleeping in one furnished room. And what of the parents who have had to ask the hospital's social service department to provide foster or adoptive care for their infants because the landlords would not let them bring the babies back to their furnished rooms. Or the nurse with her two children, who must live doubled up with relatives, ten persons in five rooms!

the Christian norm

What a contrast these situations present to the ideal of a home presented by the late Rev. Dr. William J. Kerby in his volume on *The Social Mission of Charity*. "A normal home," he says, "requires a comfortable house, adequate room space to protect privacy and morality, decent surroundings, intelligent parents, protected childhood, sufficient wholesome food, freedom from unreasonable fear and the experience of peace, affection and hope. A home involves a moral unity among parents and children that is the basis of continuity of life, a source of motive and aspiration and effective discipline that prepares one for the wider relations of life."

But what sort of preparation for life is afforded to a child forced to live in a house so infested by rats that the milkman refuses to climb the stairs? What is the outlook for the little girl whose widowed mother tries in vain to move from an area where her eleven-year old daughter was raped? What are the prospects of family solidarity when housing problems force children to be separated from their parents and to be placed in several homes?

Failure to recognize these demands is a denial of personality and the defeat of a Christian conscience.

Bernadette Soubirous proves that sanctity can be found in poverty, but all too frequently one finds confirmed the sad comment of Jacob Riis: "The most pitiful victim of city life is not the slum child who dies but the slum child who lives. Every time a child dies, the nation loses a prospective citizen, but in every slum child the nation has a probable consumptive and a possible criminal."

supply and demand

Unfortunately the construction of dwellings has not kept pace with the new demands. A serious depression halted building. 1934 saw only 22,000 homes erected in contrast to 491,000 in 257 typical cities in 1925. A few years later, war needs took top priority.

Since VJ Day there has been an upswing in home building but much of it is intended for immediate sale. Thus it fails to meet the requirements of those who must rent. That this is no small proportion of our population can be gleaned from the 1940 census. Thirty-seven million dwellings were listed; more than half of the twenty-nine million non-farm units were rented.

The short supply of rental housing affected the lowest income group most seriously. To be sure, philanthropic and investment interests provided some subsidized housing during the first quarter of this century, but during the past fifteen years public housing, under federal or state auspices, has offered considerable relief. For instance, under the U. S. Housing Act of 1937 about 192,000 dwelling units were built in 260 localities. The 1949 Act authorized an additional 810,000 units over a six-year period. From the reports of discussions on Capitol Hill, one wonders how many will be permitted this year!

public housing

The underlying philosophy in these two measures is expressed in the Declaration of Policy of the 1947 Housing Act:

It is hereby declared to be the policy of the United States to promote the general welfare of the nation by employing its funds and credit . . . to assist the several states and their political sub-divisions to alleviate present and recurring unemployment and to remedy the unsafe and unsanitary housing conditions and the acute shortage of decent, safe and sanitary dwellings for families of low income, in rural or urban communities, that

are injurious to the health, safety, and morals of the citizens of the nation.

Low-rent housing projects therefore are designed to care for "families . . . in the lowest income group . . . who cannot afford to pay enough to cause private enterprise . . . to build an adequate supply of decent, safe, and sanitary dwellings for their use." They are constructed, owned and operated by local housing authorities. Funds for planning and building come from the federal government on temporary loans; permanent financing is later provided by loans from private investors and the government.

The rent paid by the tenants (determined by income, not by size of the dwelling) covers the major part of the operating costs, including the amortization of the loan. The deficit is made up by a government subsidy, but in no year has the maximum subsidy allowed by Congress been required. The local community annually receives ten per cent of the shelter rent as a payment in lieu of taxes.

The following provisions insure that only low-income families who cannot afford privately-owned housing are admitted:

1. The top rent for admission must be at least 20 per cent below the rents at which private enterprise is providing a substantial supply of available standard housing, either new or old.
2. The net income of families at admission (less a \$100 exemption for each minor member) cannot exceed five times the annual rent to be charged, including utilities.
3. Local authorities must set maximum income, both for admission to the project and for continued residence, subject to FHA approval.
4. The authority must reexamine the incomes of all tenant families periodically to adjust rents if necessary and to evict those families whose incomes have risen above the limit for continued occupancy. Maximum income limits for continued occupancy are generally set 20-25 per cent above the admission limits to allow some increase in family income without necessitating eviction.

In the face of limited housing facilities, what happens to a tenant forced to move because of over-income? For some, public housing is a stepping-stone to the joys of home ownership, others look for other rent. Some states, Connecticut for instance, have

et up a program of moderate rental housing designed for "families of moderate income (veterans given preference) who are unable to pay, with the incomes they receive, the rents being charged by private enterprise, and who are, at the same time, ineligible for low-rent housing because their incomes are too great. Under these regulations no family is eligible whose income exceeds six times the annual shelter rent of the unit to be occupied plus \$300 for each minor dependent, and occupancy must cease when the family's income increases 20 per cent above these limits."

Under this program there is no subsidy. Rents for units of varying size are determined by the sum needed to cover the entire operating costs, the amortization of the loan over a period of fifty years, as well as a ten per cent payment of shelter rent to the city in lieu of taxes.

Both the low-rent and moderate rental programs are designed to aid families. Priority is governed by housing need, first consideration being given to those without housing due to eviction or condemnation, those under court eviction through no fault of their own, those in rooming houses or hotels, overcrowded and doubled-up families. In all instances families with dependent children are given preference over families without dependent children.

not the sole solution

No one would claim that public housing offers the only solution to those who are in need of adequate housing. In some instances the apartments are too small due to the limitations of unit cost imposed under the provisions of the 1937 Act. The later measure provided for larger units. Nor can one give an unqualified answer to the question of how much public housing a community can afford. But in pondering solutions to today's housing needs the Christian should be mindful of the injunctions laid down by Pope Pius XI in his encyclical on Christian Marriage:

Now since it is no rare thing to find that the perfect observance of God's commands and conjugal integrity encounter difficulties by reason of the fact that the man and wife are in straitened circumstances, their necessities must be relieved as far as possible.

And so . . . in the state such economic and social methods should be adopted as will enable every head of a family to earn as much as is necessary for himself, his wife and for the rearing of his children. . . . When

these means do not fulfill the needs . . . Christian charity toward our neighbor demands that those things which are lacking should be provided. . . . If, however, private resources do not suffice, it is the duty of public authority to supply for the insufficient forces of individual effort, particularly in a matter which is of such importance to the common weal, touching as it does the maintenance of the family and married people. If families, particularly those in which there are many children, have not suitable dwellings . . . it is patent to all to what an extent married people may lose heart, and how home life and the observance of God's commands are made difficult for them; indeed it is obvious how great a peril can arise to the public security and to the welfare and very life of civil society itself. . . . Wherefore, those who have the care of the state and of the public good cannot neglect the needs of married people and their families, without bringing great harm upon the state and on the common welfare. . . . Hence, in making the laws and in disposing of public funds they must do their utmost to relieve the needs of the poor, considering such a task as one of the most important of their administrative duties.



"I GUESS THEY HAD US IN MIND."

"This is a Catholic Family"

LEST we forget that to provide housing is a corporal work of mercy we publish the following article. The writer, from California, remains anonymous because of the nature of the project described.

IN his new book, *Many Are One*, Father Leo Trese writes that it should be possible for a wayfarer to go to a Catholic home for shelter with complete confidence, saying, "I'm sure of getting help here; this is a *Catholic* family."

In *Mission to the Poorest* Père Loew tells the story of a priest, giving a lecture on Catholicism, and challenged by a communist who said, "If it were possible today to win men to the ideas set forth by the speaker, there would be no need for communism. We should have social equality then in every class and calling. But do you think that you are able, with all your speeches and lectures, to change men's outlook today? If a worker and his family were wandering around this town this very night, without means or shelter, do you mean to tell me that out of all your hearers—who call themselves good Catholics and never dream of missing Mass on Sundays—there would be a single one who would be willing to share his home with that family? And if there were, do you suppose people wouldn't mock him for a fool? Can you think of a Christian industrialist, lying snugly under three warm blankets, and hearing these shelterless wretches wandering the streets, who would so much as get out of bed and give them one of his blankets? Certainly you can't, in spite of your lectures. We communists, we have a mission to fulfill. . . ."

And Christ said, speaking of His second coming, "Then the king will say to those on his right hand, 'Come, blessed of my Father, take possession of the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me to eat; I was thirsty and you gave me to drink; I was a stranger and you took me in; naked and you covered me; sick and you visited me; I was in prison and you came to me.' Then the just will answer him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see thee hungry, and feed thee, or thirsty, and gave thee drink? And when did we see thee a stranger, and take thee in; or naked, and clothe thee? Or when did we see thee in prison and come to thee?' And answering the king will say to them, 'Amen, I say to you, as long as you did it for one of these the least of my brethren, you did it for me.'"

to be taken seriously

Three quotations, and we can test their truth by the reaction we have to them. Could anybody, anybody at all, come to you for shelter and be confident of his or her welcome? If not, isn't the accusation of the French communist true? And what about the words of Christ? He was not speaking in a parable. His meaning could hardly have been clearer. How can we escape it? At the very least, how can we remain comfortable in the face of what He went on to say to those who did *not* minister to Him in the person of His least ones—"Depart from me, accursed ones, into the everlasting fire which was prepared for the devil and his angels."

Our difficulty here, as with most of the Gospel, is that we simply do not take the words of Christ to mean exactly what they say. We clothe His very direct statements in a comfortable sort of Palestinian haze and feel in a vague way that if we had been running the inn in Bethlehem, things would certainly have been different, and if we had lived in a town visited by the apostles we would have rushed forward with offers of hospitality. That conceded, we feel, for no reason at all, that our obligations are discharged. We somehow fail to see that Christ lives today in those who need our help, and that if we refuse ourselves to them, we are turning Christ away just as much as we would have done if we shut the door to Him while He was on a preaching trip in Galilee.

And the shelter we are called upon to give is not always the physical shelter of a roof, a bed, and three meals a day (although that has its place, and a far greater place than most of us like to admit—but we shall come to that later), but a spiritual sort of refuge. Is there one of us who doesn't possess three or four completely boring friends? If we were saints, we probably wouldn't think they were boring, but since we're not, we do. The sort of people who call up and talk for hours, always about themselves. The ones who come for an evening visit and stay and stay and stay until we're all but dropping with sleep. The ones whom we visit as infrequently as possible, making our stay as brief as we can, or else make excuses to avoid seeing at all.

housing the needy

But to take the Gospel even more literally, what about the actual taking of the needy into our homes? Are we *really* meant to do that? Is Mary Jones at the office, who ekes out a dull existence in a furnished room, and is consoling herself with far too many all-night parties and consequent absences from work, really

one of Christ's least ones who would be far better off sharing my apartment? Supposing she turns out to be no better than she should be and the neighbors talk? What about Mrs. Smith whose alcoholic husband has deserted her for the third time, leaving her with two small children (always crying and with runny noses)? Should she be given the apartment over our garage rather than the two dirty fifth-floor rooms she now has? Supposing her husband turns up the worse for wear in the middle of the night? Supposing her children fight with all the nicely brought up boys and girls in the neighborhood?

the place of prudence

Supposing I just don't want to be inconvenienced by all these people intruding upon my safe comfortable family life? *Must* I? The answer is not simple. Of course, prudence has its place in any consideration of problems such as these. An overworked, not-too-well mother and housewife cannot be expected to take care of needy guests. A nervous person should not try. Almost no one living alone should do it, because it's very hard to meet difficulties arising from personal relationships all by oneself; also there could be dangers—but one shouldn't feel excused from effort because he lives alone. Rather, he should try to find a partner for a shelter project. However, where there are very young children or elderly people to be considered, prudence should certainly rule. One's first duty is to one's family—but there's a dividing line between over-caution and common sense!

But, all these categories of people excluded, there remain many who could take in those who need help. Young working people sharing apartments as so many do in the years before marriage, childless couples, families whose children are old enough to understand such matters—the list could go on and on.

a dull affair

But for most of us the taking in of the needy will not be a very dramatic affair. To put it bluntly, it will be dull. The initial glamor of a "hospitality" project wears off very quickly. The people who need material help are not usually bright amusing people (just as the people who need friends aren't). The bright amusing people are usually fairly well balanced and can get jobs and manage housing for themselves.

The ones who will come to us will, in overwhelming majority, be the failures, the ones who have tried so often to work and live like the rest of mankind that by the time they reach us it will be a job in itself to give them incentive to keep going. They will probably tell us their stories at great length and over and over

again. Their need for security may express itself in a pathetic (if rightly understood) "testing" of their relationship to us. They will not feel secure, they will hardly believe that they have found someone who is interested in them and who really loves them, and their disbelief will often take the form of what seems to be great resentment of us and whatever we are doing to help them. Really they are trying to see, even if they don't realize it themselves, how far they can go with us. They are saying to themselves, in effect, "This is too good to be true—this person cannot really care about me. I will show him my worst side and see what happens then." This is the time for love. Re-reading of Saint Paul's epistle on charity will help, too! We will have many opportunities to grow in diplomacy and tact. Saint Vincent de Paul said in the picture "Monsieur Vincent" that "It requires great love to make the poor forgive us the bread we give them." It is very natural to resent the fact that one needs help. It will be hard on us if we take expressions of this sort of resentment as being directed against us personally, and if we do, we are rather certain to give up our whole project in despair. If we can recognize that such feelings are an almost inevitable accompaniment of the problems of the unsettled people who come to us, we shall be in a much better position to treat them with compassion and understanding.

the Christian in action

Any sharing of one's living quarters, whether on a rental basis or not, affords an unparalleled opportunity of putting Christianity into action. When a person is at home he is his real self. He puts aside the formality, the business mask he may find it necessary to don during his working hours. He relaxes, he plays with his children, he looks for amusement, for happiness. He is vulnerable. Where is a better place or time to impress him with Christian values? It can be done slowly—no need for the rush of a hurried encounter where one tries to impress in the space of an hour or so. If someone who knows almost nothing of Christianity can see it in the life of a family, in the deeds of neighbors who count no trouble too great for their fellows, in the happiness that is the flower of Christianity, near-miracles of grace can be expected. Someone living with a family will sooner or later confide in them, if they are worthy of confidence. He or she will try to be like them if he sees that in them which he can admire. A fallen-away will return to the Sacraments, a bad marriage will be repaired. And all this can happen without a word of preaching—just by the example of what Christian living can be.

But none of it will happen if homes remain citadels where no intrusion is permitted. We can't love if we don't know, and we can't influence if we don't love. I have in mind a practical example of what can be done by a small group in the way of giving shelter. The group consists of three working girls who share a four-room apartment. They have room for three or four girls besides themselves and for the past three years they have been offering hospitality to any who need it. In this time they have had over a hundred guests and almost every sort of problem has come their way. They found apartments, rooms, and jobs for girls, helped expectant mothers, and have done what they could for many with psychological problems.

Many people, hearing of this project, have raised objections. "You'll be killed in your beds," is a favorite one. But the best answer to that is that it simply hasn't happened. The girls, none of whom is a trained psychologist or social worker (although they do have the help of a priest chaplain), have more than once had alcoholics with them and people with serious psychological maladjustments. It has not always been pleasant, but no one has ever been hurt, just as no one has been hurt at the Catholic Worker houses of hospitality. Luck? Much more likely the providence of God, Who is never outdone in generosity.

What about money?

Speaking of generosity brings up the problem of money. None of these girls is wealthy, but neither they nor any of their guests has ever gone hungry or lacked for real necessities. And the rent, gas and light bills have always been paid on time. They have had money stolen from them, but, amazingly enough, donations they have received (unsolicited) have almost exactly balanced thefts. On one occasion there was literally no money to pay the rent. One of the girls picked up her missal to take it to Mass, and more than enough money to cover the rent fell out of it. A Mother Cabrini-type miracle? No—money left by a guest who, unlike most, could afford to make a contribution. But certainly a case of God taking care of the situation!

In his book, *Poverty*, Père Régamey says, "It is a fact that God sends us what we need—whether money, interior strength, or good fortune. It is a fact that if a Christian is in some way put on trial before the world, as before a tribunal determined on condemning him to death, he will find the answers he needs to give without having to worry about it beforehand. . . . That God will fill our needs in abundance is so certain, that many saints and holy people make their lives depend on it to an almost comic extent. . . .

The law is so certain that the more daring saints have even founded institutions on it." In their own very small experience, these girls have found it to be true. God simply *will not* be outdone in generosity. It's as if there were a loving rivalry between Him and those who love Him. They do something and God goes them on better. The process of learning to depend upon Him in this way is something like the process of learning to swim. It's very hard to take one's feet off the bottom and really trust the water; and it is hard at first to let go and really trust God. But only when you take your feet off the bottom can you be said to be swimming and only when you are really trusting God can He give you the reward of that trust.

conquer your fears

What does this add up to? This, I think. If you are hanging back from sheltering people, either spiritually or physically, because of fear, be strong enough to throw that fear away and trust in God. Work for the attitude, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him." It is almost completely unlikely that you will be knocked on the head by a guest to whom you have opened your home; if the neighbors talk about you, you have for your consolation the words of Christ, "Blessed are you when men reproach you and persecute you and speaking falsely, say all manner of evil against you, for my sake." You will not starve or go without necessities because you are giving to others, perhaps more generously than ever before. On the contrary, you will find that there is always enough to go around.

Are you afraid that your guests will strip the house while you're out of it, that a careless smoker will start a fire, that all sorts of monkey business will go on? Again I can speak from the experience of the group I have been describing. All of them work and on numerous occasions they have had to leave girls to their own devices. No serious harm has ever been done, and they don't expect it to be. It's another instance of doing one's part and trusting in God to do His. If they take care of everything possible and then have to go to work, they feel they can expect God to take care of things while they are absent. And He does. Only about three times in three years has one of the girls had to leave her job to take care of a household emergency . . . probably a higher batting average than the ordinary head of a family maintains! So it can really be said that a project like this does not demand a full-time stay-at-home person to make it work. But it does demand a full-time spirit of self-sacrifice and love. And that God will give if we ask for it.

A Note on Rural Housing

BACK-TO-THE-LANDERS will find Elizabeth Bujak's thoughts provocative even if they don't agree with her. She and her late husband, Bill, lived in rural Michigan.

Elizabeth Bujak: "If every family on the land would take under their wings another young family or newly-married couple," Bill used to say, "the rural community would grow as it should—organically."

To expect anything as permanent as a community to develop by getting a number of individual families together, buying land near one another and co-operating on carpentry, baby-sitting and rides to town is ridiculous. Equally foolish is the hope of growing together as a community simply by meeting weekly for prayers, discussions, or schola rehearsals.

Often we are so impatient to live in a "normal" God-centered community that we do not think what the cost may be. It seems that the enthusiasm for life on the land, for a cottage economy, for close communal experiences is found in city-bred Catholics, and especially is any interest in Christian poverty found there. (Just try to interest rural people in poverty!) What happens to the eager urban couple who want to live in the country if they start out alone? The problems are so tremendous—the ordinary things like learning to conserve water when the cistern is dry, keeping a supply of wood ahead, adjusting oneself to the lack of a tile bathroom, especially meeting the loneliness of the rural area—these problems finally disillusion the family and they end up in some suburb—sad, and not too sure what went wrong.

Bill's point was that the families who by some special grace have managed to stick it out should feel it their particular apostolate to offer their homes and family life for a year or so to the eager green recruits, to smooth their path in many concrete ways. And the recruits should recognize that to undertake the art of husbandry expecting success without any period of apprenticeship is most unrealistic. The settled family says lovingly, "Let us help you." The new family says humbly, "Please teach us."

The difficulty, I think (I write this with fear and trembling), is with the *men*. Each man feels he must be father to the other man. This very normal instinct keeps him from recognizing in another man *his* fatherhood. It used to be that the rural apostle sat himself down on a piece of land and said, "Come, join me! I am forming a community—thus and so." But no one wanted to

be a joiner! Now, our hunger for community drives us to more subtle expressions of the same urge. We try to get together geographically, but the unity between the families remains a myth because there is no father and there are no sons. I think all of the traditional communities had their patriarchs (or matriarchs) who determined the general and even some of the particular patterns for the entire community. Important problems were submitted to their wisdom, and the average man experienced some of the freedom and joy which now seems limited to members of religious orders or Christian wives—the freedom and joy of obedience.

Can you imagine a "son" telling the "father," "We would like to get a cow this first year"? And the "father" explaining that the cow is a very temperamental creature, liking to be milked properly, regularly; preferring certain alarming amounts of hay and grain which must be obtained in off-hours from house building or commuting to the city job; that the same animal has a tendency to disregard man-declared pasture boundaries and she must be fenced-in or staked with shade and water available; that there is a wonderful quantity of manure obtained, 'Tis true—but how are you going to handle its disposal? The "father," if he truly loves his new "son" will firmly insist on a discipline of this enthusiasm and will offer to share his own family's milk and suggest a garden of chickens as the first project. The "son" says simply, "Well, I see what you mean, and thanks for the advice. I never knew having a cow would be so complicated. Where can I begin our garden?"

Is it hard to imagine rural enthusiasts of your acquaintance as the father or the son? If so, it is because we refuse to love, to take on the responsibility of another family—or because we refuse to subject our will to another.

I know of an example—a beautiful fatherhood in a young man. As soon as you visit in the community you are startled by his firmness in decisions and even subconsciously resentful of his undeclared authority. But as you stay on, you are impressed with the source—his great personal concern and love for every family, a sensitivity to the needs and potentialities of each man, woman, child and baby. You are made to think of a bobolink guarding its nest even against a hawk many times its size, and you begin to imagine the Fatherhood of God.

Such a father-son relationship must develop slowly, especially at first. But the tree—always a symbol of community because of the interdependency of its parts and relative permanency when full grown—develops slowly, too.

We are not interested in mushrooms!

BOOK REVIEWS

Housing Survey

TWO THIRDS OF A NATION

By Nathan Straus
Knopf, \$4.00

This is a clearly written analysis of our current housing situation with specific solutions given. To give the merits of the book first: the

author lashes out vehemently and justly against the two-bedroom "cracker box" that is being foisted upon young couples at outrageous prices. He is alert to the need for space for family living, aware of the problem of the middle income group who (ineligible for public housing) often look in despair for a place to live and are at the prey of unscrupulous speculators, and helpful in the hints he gives to would-be home owners who are unmindful of hidden costs. Especially sympathetic to the problem of negroes and other minority groups, he gives a chapter over to discussion of the segregation threat in housing, and includes in his book an article by Chester Bowles, the former governor of Connecticut, who describes one plan that state used to help families finance their own homes.

On the debit side: while I agree with Mr. Straus when he warns against precipitous installment buying of ill-constructed houses which won't last until they are paid off, I feel that he is against home ownership in general. "Under conditions of modern civilization, a man does not have to buy a cow because his family needs milk. He should not have to buy a house because his family needs a home." Even when he is supposedly giving the "pros" of home ownership they are really "cons." His book therefore would be especially damaging to that increasingly large group of American men who are afraid of taking on the responsibility of providing their own house for their family and gladly let someone else do it, whether it be an individual landlord, the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, or the city) provide housing for them. Mr. Straus' solution—that a man can have the delights of ownership (which however he doesn't seem to see as any kind of a necessity, but more as a spiritual luxury) without its burdens is co-operative housing. Needless to say, he doesn't use the word in the sense it would be used in referring to Ed Willock's group. The co-operative housing he envisions sets one wondering—although he flatly denies that it would be collectivistic. Yet it seems that since *everyone* owns it, in reality on the mammoth scale he suggests, *no one* owns it. While the author may be given credit for sincerity in his awareness of an acute problem, his book is hardly the one to please the Christian revolutionary who will see in it a way of perpetuating the very evils of contemporary civilization which we are out to change.

DOROTHY DOHEN

Courageous Undertaking

THE IRONY OF AMERICAN HISTORY

By Reinhold Niebuhr
Scribners, \$2.50

Self-knowledge is as essential to a nation as to an individual, and as difficult to come by since

it requires a basic humility that is scarcely a conspicuous characteristic of nations. As Dr. Niebuhr points out, "We cannot expect even the wises of nations to escape every peril of moral and spiritual complacency, for nations have always been constitutionally self-righteous" (p. 149). Despite the difficulty, self-knowledge must be had and Dr. Niebuhr has the courage to undertake the task for us.

He has chosen to conduct this self-examination in terms of the "ironic" as contrasted with the "tragic" and the "pathetic." In a brief preface the author has indicated the differences between these categories. If these explanations prove inadequate for the reader, he would be well advised to read the last chapter first, for without a clear idea of their meaning much of the value of the book will be lost.

There are so many excellent insights in this book that a brief review could not possibly do justice to them all. A few points must suffice. While acknowledging the value in our insistence on the dignity of the human individual, Niebuhr adds: "But our exaltation of the individual involves us in some very ironic contradictions. On the one hand, our culture does not really value the individual as much as it pretends; on the other hand, if justice is to be maintained and our survival assured we cannot make individual liberty the end of life as our ideology asserts" (pp. 7-8). This is a good example of the balance that shows itself throughout the work.

In the second chapter, "The Innocent Nation in an Innocent World," he traces the roots of our self-righteousness to New England Calvinism and Jeffersonian Deism: "Every nation has its own form of spiritual pride ... Our version is that our nation turned its back on the vices of Europe and made a new beginning" (p. 28).

Dr. Niebuhr gives a very sober account of our virtues as a people without any flag-waving, and with a keen realization that God is the master of human destiny. He is especially critical of the idea that our prosperity is a divine reward for our virtues; a whole chapter is devoted to undermining this notion, also a heritage from Calvinism and Deism.

This book is an intelligent appraisal of the "American way of life" from a Christian viewpoint. It is a most valuable contribution, because of its sympathy and its objectivity. Readers of *Integrity* will recognize many of the points made by this outstanding Protestant theologian; they have been made many times by contributors to its pages.

JAMES M. EGAN, O.P.

The Universal Call

MANY ARE ONE
By Leo J. Trese
Fides, \$2.00

This pithy volume may one day be hailed as the clarion call to Catholic Action in America. The possibility is suggested by the fact that it is directed to all Catholics, not merely those for whom Catholic Action is already an integral part of their lives. Father Trese propounds the thesis that Catholic Action, as Christ's answer to secularism, is the concern of all members of the Mystical Body.

The flight from morality is so widespread that the clergy, limited as they are in number and influence, cannot cope with the disaster. Laymen, with a knowledge of Christian principles and the ambition to restore all things in Christ must transform society from within.

The program to which the author exhorts us consists first in making oneself Christlike through prayer and meditation. In the second place we must prepare for active participation by studying conditions in the light of Christian social and economic principles. Finally, we are urged to act in union with others of like mind and spirit.

More clearly than many of his fellow priests Father Trese realizes that the clergy have been feeding the people spiritual pabulum instead of the strong meat for a healthy apostolate. My one criticism is the author's insistence that the first step should be the reforming of parish societies from within. Can the moribund bring forth the newborn babe?

JOHN W. NEVIN

That All May Be One

ONE SHEPHERD
By Charles Boyer, S.J.
Kenedy, \$2.00

Father Boyer has written a handbook for those Catholics who wish to speed the day when there will indeed be unity of faith—and what good Catholic does not wish this?

Father Boyer is the editor of the quarterly review *Unitas*, which is the official publication of the movement that works toward church reunion. There is authority in his work and an obvious understanding of the whole problem. What Father Boyer reminds us—as the Pope has reminded us—is that real church union can come only through reunion. There can be no compromising with the truth. Catholics should always hold open the door for the return of separated brethren but Catholics can never attempt to aid that reunion by compromise or even by diminishing stress on our differences.

This may seem a hard saying and yet it is truth. There is only One True Church and the kindest thing Catholics can do is to remind their separated brethren of this.

Father Boyer gives the background on the various breaks from the Church, gives it objectively too. Then he goes into the attempts at reunion and a summary of what is being done and what can be done. He seems to feel that this return can best be made by individual conversions although it is possible that as they broke away in one large group, some of the Eastern and perhaps Anglican groups may return in the same way.

I write this review on the seventh anniversary of my own reception into the Catholic Church and I think today, as I thought then, there are too few Catholics striving to bring others to the Church. We have all of us through grace been given something to shout about and we do not even whisper.

Within the framework outlined by Father Boyer there is much that can be done. What's more, I believe that after the first shock of hearing what to them sounds like an arrogant assertion, non-Catholics will come to respect Catholic spokesmen who unequivocally state the plain fact that God established One True Church and that all men should seek to become members of that One True Church.

In this day when nobody seems to believe or care much about anything, Catholics who believe and Catholics who care can do great good for their neighbors. It is time that Catholics speak out boldly and plainly. They have an obligation to share the gift God has given them.

DALE FRANCIS

Reply to the Critics

WITNESS

By Whittaker Chambers
Random House, \$5.00

The baffling thing about this book is the fact of its greatness. Baffling not from the reader's standpoint, for that is what will delight him and make him wonder, but rather from the point of view of a reviewer who has to tell in a comparatively few short sentences what are the elements of the greatness.

By now just about everyone and his grandmother has reviewed the book. It has been praised for its fascination, its spy story, its study of a soul. The leftists have taken umbrage at Chambers' linking together all of the believers in man, humanitarians, Marxists, liberals, as being soul-mates of communism and its helpmates in making the world we have.

I find myself arguing more with the critics than with the book. Even the ones who are high in their praise of it have passed over aspects which I think worth enumerating. Chambers' discovery of the land as a way out of the industrial dilemma has been nowhere mentioned in reviews I have read. Yet that appears to be a major thing as far as he is concerned.

This man who is now writing his reflections on Saint Benedict shows a decided Benedictine trend of thought when he says: "In my last years at *Time* when I could spend more days at home (his Maryland farm), I took a much greater part in the farm activities. I am perfectly happy at such work. I only regret that I did not come to it when my strength was at its peak, and I had enough years left to live so that I could plan in terms of the decades that farming requires."

Chambers tells how he tries to protect his children from the siren call of the radio and of the city. He wishes to introduce them to good work, good music and good books, and the tremendous bond between the man and one child is seen in a tearing scene when the child senses that the darkness of suicidal thoughts is moving in around his father. In the blackness of a farm night he clings to his father and begs him never to go away. It is impossible to read that without feeling the beating of angel wings, guiding the child to guide the father.

If you wish to know what it takes to make a writer, you will find plenty to think about when he describes life at *Time* magazine. If you have marvelled in times past at the articles on Marian Anderson and Reinhold Niebuhr in that magazine and the one on the Devil in *Life* magazine, you will learn out of what stress they came. In the gaudy midways of those magazines with their strident sideshows, it was like coming upon a Shakespearean play done with consummate skill.

If you wish to get a glimpse into the army of rags and tatters that made up the staff of the *Daily Worker*, you will find it, told simply and without complications. There is a charity in Chambers' way of treating people that balances fairly between truth and justice. It gives you an increasing faith in the integrity of the man. When you finish reading the book, you agree wholeheartedly with the cry of Mrs. Chambers in the courtroom when she could stand the attacks against her husband no longer and cried out that her husband was a great man.

The difficulty of the reviewer is to make the reader see what an all round remarkable book Chambers has created. The trial and the investigation leading up to it are told with much more detail than the newspapers gave to it and the story makes more sense. Yet you get the feeling

that the case is a happy hook on which to hang a remarkable book of reminiscences and philosophy. If you thought that nothing more could be said on the case, the book will be a delightful surprise.

One criticism made against the book has been that Chambers is guilty of a Messianic complex, that he sees himself as some Saint Michael holding off the dark angels, singlehandedly. This criticism stems from his use of the word *witness* which he gives as one standing up for a truth, or just appearing against another person in a trial. The word has Catholic overtones which might give Chambers food for thought if he should stumble upon any good writing on the Sacrament of Confirmation. It is difficult to see how he could have told his story adequately without delving deeply into his motivations at every step of his peculiar way of the cross.

The Quakers must wonder at the book for they hold a strange place in it. Chambers gives many reflections on the peace he finds in their meetings. Yet he is anything but a pacifist for he believes that a war with Russia is inevitable. Out of Marxism, Chambers approached and embraced Quaker ways of thought and action. At the height of the investigation when the committee of Congress felt they would be made fools of if they accepted Chambers' testimony any longer, it was a Quaker member of the committee who pleaded with the group to continue its investigation. The thought that moved Representative Nixon was a good Quaker thought. He felt that the testimony of Hiss had been "too mouthy." The Quakers take seriously Our Lord's words that our answers should be yea, yea and nay, nay.

In this election year the Republicans who believe with some good reason that the Devil is a Democrat will search the book for campaign material and they will find it in abundance. With Chambers, the reader will pass from person to person, high in government circles, watching the espionage and communist web at close hand. You feel, as I felt intensely during the war years in Washington, the mystery of iniquity working, intangible, terrible, something out of a bottomless abyss.

But where, the reader asks, in all of this is the Hiss-Chambers trial? It is there all right, in all of its sinuous aspects. You may have read the newspapers avidly at the time of the trials yet in this book you will find insight and aspects that make the case far more understandable. You will grasp, and here I differ with Father Gillis, what makes a communist. You may be surprised to learn that it isn't Marxism. Even the liberals have that nowadays.

Chambers explains so well the need that man has for a faith to live by. In a world that seems crazy, communism says logically, let us get rid of the dead wood, clear the land and build a new world. The intellectual on the outside, thinking that it is a question of Marxism, will get himself into so many confusions that communists never worry about.

In the book you get an overwhelming picture of the wholeness of the man, the slow forging of a faith to live by, born from suffering that borders so often on the dark night of the soul. It is, again I say, a book of greatness. It will give you a better understanding of communism than ninety-nine per cent of the other things you will read. It will also give you a picture of a remarkable man, moving toward a profoundly Christian synthesis of thought.

ARTHUR SHEEHAN

The Positive Value of Pain

THE STORY OF A SOUL

By Saint Therese of Lisieux

Trans. by Michael Day, Cong. Orat.

Newman, Cloth \$2.00, Paper \$1.00

SAINT THERESE AND SUFFERING

By Abbe Andre Combes

Kenedy, \$2.50

The providence of God is evident in His having raised in the modern world a saint whose chief experience was suffering, for twentieth-century man might be characterized as man the sufferer

who feels very often a great need of understanding the paradox of pain.

The Story of a Soul, the autobiography of Saint Thérèse of the Infant Jesus, which has recently been translated again, into colloquial English by Father Michael Day, offers a concrete resolution of the paradox and has enabled literally millions of people to perceive, in some measure at least, the positive value of pain and to reconcile not only its compatibility but its necessity with the existence of a generous and merciful God. It will aid millions more. It is a precious volume, at once an eminently readable autobiography and in a somewhat hidden way a manual of mystical and ascetical theology, which can be understood readily by readers of widely separated experience. For those who are tormented by physical illness, psychological disorders, moral perplexities, adverse circumstances—by suffering in any of its forms—the autobiography is an inexhaustible well of refreshment.

In *Saint Thérèse and Suffering* Abbé Combes (the author of *The Spirituality of Saint Thérèse* and *The Heart of Saint Thérèse*) examines with love and with an almost scrupulous scientific exactness what he terms in his subtitle "The Spirituality of Saint Thérèse in its Essence." He is especially interested in tracing the historical progress made by the saint in her understanding of and response to the Cross—from her early childhood, during which she prayed for bitterness without understanding her prayer, through her maturity when she had penetrated the meaning of suffering to an immense depth and had learned to find peace and joy in it. The Abbé's "microanalytic" method is occasionally obtrusive, but it succeeds in showing with the greatest clarity that the life of Thérèse was a steady ascent to Calvary and to the glory beyond.

DENNIS SHEA

Our Corporate Treasure

CHRIST IN THE LITURGY

By Dom Illtyd Trethowan

Sheed and Ward, \$2.50

In his preface the author warns us that his work is "*oeuvre de vulgarisation*" for the benefit of "the Catholic who wishes to extend his knowledge and

understanding of the Liturgy beyond the point to which the notes in his missal will lead him."

From the first chapters on, Dom Trethowan goes into the core of the matter by showing us that the Liturgy is the very texture of Christian life. The whole purpose of mankind is to be raised to the Incarnate Word. That is the Christian Mystery, according to Saint Paul. This *mysterium* can be enunciated in one word—Christ, referring both to the person of the Savior and to His Mystical Body, which is the Church. This mystery, which was accomplished in Our Lord in all its historical and physical reality, is realized in us in symbols, beneath representative and figurative

ms. Yet these are not mere appearances—they communicate to us the full reality of the new life which Christ our Mediator offers to us. That is the essence of the Liturgy.

The very understanding of what is said above is already an answer to the usual prejudices against Liturgy mentioned by the author in his first chapter. One of these prejudices is that the Liturgy would be an escape from worship itself. In other words, an escape from the difficulties of mental prayer. This objection falls apart if we understand that the Liturgy is the center as well as the spring of all Christian life. Therefore the source of the highest contemplation is necessarily sacramental.

Going through the text of the ordinary of the Roman Mass we see how the actual form of our Mass grew with the historical development of the Western world. The Eastern Rites are another confession of this one worship of the Church. And it is not excluded that in civilizations of the future new liturgical forms will arise. They all spring from the inexhaustible life of Christ in the Church. The liturgical year is the gradual unfolding and application of this immense wealth of the Redemption. "The past is not just a memory for us in the Liturgy. It is an effective past, a past which is reproduced for us, operating upon us, because it is contained in the living Christ. The mystery is so rich and so far beyond our comprehension in its totality, that it must be spread out before us over the whole year, so that we may gradually assimilate it more and more."

At the end the author devotes a chapter to such subjects as bringing the people to understanding and to participating in the Liturgy, singing the Mass, the dialogue Mass, use of the Latin or of the vernacular, evolution of the Liturgy in the future, and popular devotions.

Christ in the Liturgy can be greatly helpful to all of us who wish to live as fully as possible the life of the Church which is God's life communicated to mankind in Christ. We can learn from it—in case we have not discovered it yet—"the joy of the Worship"—and the fact that the *sanctus* the Church says in every Mass is truly "the sacramental anticipation of the beatific vision."

LILLIAN BAERT

Economics Rules the Roost

THEY WENT TO COLLEGE

By Havemann and West
Harcourt, Brace, \$4.00

This survey of some 9,000 *Time* subscribers who happen to be college graduates with names beginning with "Fa," provides an interesting study of the extent to which money values dominate the lives of educated Americans, right down to what they do in bed.

Time's little charts, which are scattered throughout the book, make a neat picture. In the matter of having children, our college graduates have only as many as they think their pocketbooks will allow, preferring all along to err in favor of their pocketbooks. Moral laws and the Pope's address to midwives out the window, the deciding factor is the empirical one: "How many can we afford?" The graduate least likely to rear a brood of children is the "old grad" who lives in a big city and earns less than \$3,000 a year. Among the people who were saved from the blessing of a college education, a more emotional and perhaps more human standard seems to operate—the old law of the preservation of the race. The

poorer and more oppressed you are, the more children you are likely have. Why this rule should not apply to college graduates is difficult to understand, unless you assume that education has something to do with it, which is worth assuming. College graduates, it appears, are willing to let economics have the final say in their most intimate moral, spiritual and family affairs.

The Victorian fear that education would afflict women with "brain fever" was long ago demolished, but it seems apparent that education (and our times) has affected the values of women to a greater extent than those of men. It may simply be that woman's natural role as wife and mother demand that her values be more flexible to start with. Observers of the reign of nazism in Germany are quick to admit that women were more severely affected than men by the Hitlerian ideology. And the fate of the "emancipated woman" under communism would seem to bear this out. The growing importance attributed to the money factor in our own country has likewise more severely affected women.

Where the economic factor really rules the roost is in the home of the working wife. Despite the fact that both she and her husband work, their combined family income does not appreciably differ from families where only the husband works. The working wife works because she has to—or because she thinks she has to. With her, the business of making money takes precedence (and perhaps rightly so in a minority of cases) over such matters as having children. Whether such people are wholly victims of the capitalist system, or partly of their own whim, *Time* doesn't attempt to say.

Havemann and West have succeeded in presenting a set of very controversial facts as impartially as possible. Their book is bound to send a larger number of next year's crop of high school graduates heading for the portals of Harvard and Yale (whence they can proceed to guarantee their pile), but it should also serve to confirm many Christian convictions as well.

DENNIS HOWARD

BOOK NOTES

It is always good to be reminded of one's roots, no matter how deep and remote they may be. This is the aim of F. R. Hoare's *Eight Decisive Books of Antiquity* (Sheed and Ward, \$4.00) and it fulfills its purpose adequately.

—J. M. F.

Let's Pray by Sister M. Juliana, O.P. (Catechetical Guild, 25¢) is a nice little book designed for the very young child. It contains the Sign of the Cross, the Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be—all with brief, clear explanations; some simple catechism is included. The illustrations are mostly delightful and the arrangement is attractive. One wishes, however, that the binding of the book were made to withstand the rough use to which little children unwittingly subject it. This is a common drawback of all such religious books.

—M. J. N.

We sincerely hope that the *C.F.M. Chaplain's Manual* (obtainable from Christian Family Action, 100 West Monroe Street, Chicago, for 75¢) will encourage priests to become active in the Christian Family Movement. It is well-written and practical.

—D. D.

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